

# WHAT IS GOING ON IN MUSIC



MME. OLIVE TREMSTAD, SOPRANO, SINGING.

The Damrosch brothers, Frank and Walter, who have been tolerably active in the musical doings of this city for the last quarter of a century, will begin tomorrow evening at Carnegie Hall a series of four festival concerts devoted to the celebration of Johannes Brahms. Several of his most important compositions will be performed, including the "German Requiem," which because of certain difficulties is heard too rarely.

All four of the master's symphonies, his B flat piano concerto and his famous "concerto against the violin" will also be on the programmes of these entertainments. Mrs. Matzenauer will be the principal singer. Mr. Zimbalist the violinist and Mr. Bachaus the pianist. Frank Damrosch will conduct the choral works and Walter the orchestra. It will thus be seen that the preparations are on a large scale and the probabilities are that the festival will be one of real dignity and artistic worth.

If such a series of concerts were to be announced in any German city there would be an undercurrent of excitement throughout the German Empire, not to say through much of Europe. Sentiments would be on sale as far away as London, and Brahms enthusiasts would journey many dusty miles and dwell in uncomfortable hotels in order to be present at the concerts. What will be the outcome here this writer does not know, nor does the matter greatly concern him. But it may be noted in passing that the much advertised music festivals of Germany are infrequently held in cities offering such abundant and inviting accommodations as much abused New York.

The necessity for making propaganda for the art of Brahms is fortunately long past. His growth was slow. The public was puzzled and even affronted at first by the unbending chastity of his style and the stern continence of his methods. He offered nothing to the flesh, but sought to reach only the spirit. There were many who thought this not quite decent, and the name of Brahms was vigorously tossed upon the rude waves of hostile criticism.

Special correspondents in famous musical capitals such as Munich wrote of his symphonies that they could not make head or tail of them. Others declared that his piano concertos were symphonies with piano obbligati. Still others, with a greater show of reason, vowed that they knew nothing at all about instrumental music and that his orchestral scores were as opaque as ground glass.

But above all men hated his melodic idiom. Brahms from the first sang in cool accents. He had no butter in his



MME. BERTA MORANA, SOPRANO, SINGING.

speech. He blew no kisses from his lips. Neither did he smile wooingly from his artistic eyes. He had compelling ways. He presented himself not as one seeking favors but as a master demanding homage.

His melodic idiom was founded on a conception not familiar to the musical amateurs of his early days. And here we find ourselves upon the verge of that domain of technicalities which is forbidden territory to the writer for general reading. But sometimes it is imperative to overstep the boundary in order that instruction may be sought.

W. H. Hadow in his admirable "Studies in Modern Music" has said: "Tintoretto claimed the drawing of Michael Angelo and the coloring of Titian." Brahms in like manner may claim the counterpoint of Bach and the structure of Beethoven. And in this pithy saying lies a world of information.

The polyphonic creation of Bach, the method which he developed, is practically inexhaustible. It is applicable to every form of composition and it was in his perception and application of this important fact that Brahms demonstrated his right to be regarded as one in the imposing line of pathfinders in music.



MR. THOMAS A. BUSBY, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF THE LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA.

Bach's genius for contrapuntal composition summed up for him the ancient riddle makers' motto: "many from one," but with the all important addition that the unity must always reign supreme over the multiplicity. When therefore he was composing for several voices in combination he treated each of them characteristically, giving it a special and clearly defined individuality, and at the same time he kept the perfection of the entire polyphonic structure inviolate.

Thus, as Dr. Parry has well put it, "he made the harmonies which were the sum of the combined counterpoints move so as to illustrate the principles of harmonic form and thus give the hearer the sense of orderliness and design, as well as the sense of contrapuntal complexity."

The application of Bach's conceptions to the composition of music in all the older

to orchestral composition, indeed, but they were literally applied—they did not rule. The laws which ruled were those of single voiced melody, and that implies a harmonic basis precisely the opposite of the polyphonic. It calls for a succession of chords subsidiary to the melody which is conceived as the upper part of the series.

In the typical classical symphony when we hear a subsidiary melodic episode which appears as counterpoint to a leading thematic idea, we recognize the fact that the chord harmony is never interrupted and that the mind is not distracted from its contemplation of music of the strictly harmonic type.

In the process of musical growth the purposes of the romantic composers who were seeking for a kind of melody suited to the expression of their rhapsodic thought, there came into existence a new and more solid sort of thematic foundation. The fluidity which characterized the themes of the earlier masters, whose chief aim was treatment of the theme itself, was gone. In its place we find a melodic type which instead of offering itself readily to every process of thematic development demands rather the right to be received as a definite representative of some programmatic idea.

Upon the foundation of this conception of the theme we can see the building of the structures of Berlioz, Liszt, and finally Wagner. In the operation of the mentalities of the two first named the polyphony of Bach played a part almost negligible. In the creations of Wagner we find a new form, the interweaving of leading motives (having originally no contrapuntal relation) in a web of polyphony effective because designed for a graphic stage accompaniment.

The restoration of the Bach principle to absolute instrumental music was the work of Brahms and it was in making this restoration with all the modern developments in melodic and harmonic conception ready to his hand that he put forth that new and somewhat austere melodic style which so frightened his first hearers.

Mr. Hadow, who has studied Brahms carefully from this point of view, says: "The symphony in F major is one of the least formal of compositions, but the most laborious academism in music could not compile a more elaborate polyphony than Brahms has here created."

True, indeed, and equally true of many other works of Brahms. And here we come upon the singular trait of his musical creation which has set him apart in the world of genius and which has aroused against him the foolish antagonism of those convinced that genius is above the government of fundamental law.

In applying the basic rules of Bach's polyphony to the building of a modern symphony Brahms has made a structure so fine, so detailed, so dignified and so convincing in its architectural logic that the so-called romanticists have rebelled against him and scolded at him as a pedagogue. But the pedagogic proclamations

of the Bach symphonies have betaken themselves to the conservatory classroom, while the structures remain in the sunlight of the art world, adored by pilgrims from all the world.

At one time it was thought to be a clever proceeding to set up Brahms as a demonstration of the utility of all the teachings of Wagner, and one result of this was to make for him enemies of all the ardent Wagnerites. He has not yet ceased to suffer from this infantile foolishness.

Even a superficial observer of art matters ought to be able to perceive that Wagner's tremendous creations in the domain of the lyric drama cannot be used as illustrations to enforce arguments against creations in an entirely different art field. Wagner can be called into the field against Rossini or Puccini or any writer for the stage. But he furnishes no ammunition for a battle on the symphonic plains.

So far as the development of modern instrumental music is concerned Wagner has affected it by inducing some later masters to apply the leading motive method in all its ramifications to the composition of symphonic poems with stories to tell and personages and moving forces to represent. He has also aided in the enrichment of the idioms of instrumentation. But to the progress of symphonic composition Wagner cannot be said to have contributed any other novelties.

In the four symphonies which Brahms gave to the world and which will be performed in the course of these festival concerts he supplied something greatly needed just at the time when he sent forth the works. This was a demonstration of the vital truth that the possibilities of the sonata form had not been exhausted and that it was as well suited to the embodiment of the delineative conceptions of the romantic period as it had been to the creations of pure musical beauty in the classical day.

Regarded, however, not as demonstrations of any principle, but merely as musical productions, these four symphonies are now accepted as among the most valued treasures of the world of instrumental music. The confusion of mind caused by their method has passed away. Their message is now read with clearness by all music lovers, and their popularity is such that conductors have no hesitation in using these works when bidding for personal success as interpreters. With this condition we may well rest content for the present. It is safe to predict that so long as symphonic music continues to interest the artistic world, these four compositions of Brahms will afford profound satisfaction to those who listen with their minds as well as with the outer ear.

The choral music of this master there are certain fundamental characteristics which disclose its kinship with the instrumental. Perhaps in no other composition will these traits be found more strikingly exhibited than in the "Triumphed," which is about to be heard for the first time here. An eight part chorus with barytone solo, this composition displays in all its glory the mastery of Brahms in vocal counterpoint.

It is a grand specimen of writing for two choruses and it combines in a marvelous manner vigor and nobility. Indeed in no choral writing since that of Handel is there a more successful union of dignity with energy. Without doubt this admirable composition will be welcomed by music lovers as a very precious addition to their collection of Brahms treasures.

The German Requiem is familiar to all lovers of great music, but it is not heard here as often as it ought to be, and the coming performance will furnish an opportunity of making its acquaintance to many young music lovers who have never heard it. A few suggestive words from Philip Spitta's famous essay on Brahms may not be amiss here. He says: "The lyrical treatment of the requiem is of the oratorio type, so far as that in most of the movements it is founded on the popular ideas and images of death and life everlasting. On the other hand, these have not so deep an effect on the musical setting as they would have had with Handel. The composition is worked out more decidedly on the lines of pure music and thus has an affinity with Bach's mode of work. So here again we find something new in point of style."

What is also new is that the German Requiem consists exclusively of choral movements. Brahms has thus shown us that he is capable of great compositions for a solo voice. In the requiem

## THE WEEK AT THE OPERA

MONDAY.—"Die Meistersinger," with Mmes. Gieseler as Eva, Miss Wickham as Magdalena, Mr. Slezak as Walter, Mr. Well as Hans Sachs, M. Gortz as Beckmesser, Mr. Grawold as Pogner and Mr. Toscanini in the conductor's chair.

TUESDAY.—Special performance of "Cavalleria Rusticana" and "Pallacini," with Miss Destinn as Santuzza and Mr. Caruso as Turiddu. The other singers in the two operas will be Mmes. Maubourg and Alten, Messrs. Martin, Amato and Gilly.

WEDNESDAY.—"Madama Butterfly," Miss Farrar as the heroine, and Miss Fornia, Messrs. Martin and Scotti in the other roles.

THURSDAY.—"Die Walküre," Mmes. Fremstad and Morena, Messrs. Jörn and Well.

FRIDAY.—"Mona," with Mmes. Homer as the heroine, Messrs. Martin, Grawold, Hinder, Witterspoon and Reiss in other roles.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON.—First performance this season of Massenet's opera "Manon," with Miss Farrar in the title rôle and Mr. Caruso as the Chevalier des Grieux.

SATURDAY EVENING.—"Tannhäuser," Mmes. Fremstad and Morena, Messrs. Slezak, Well and Witterspoon.

## CONCERTS OF THE WEEK

SUNDAY.—German Sailors Home benefit concert, Carnegie Hall, 3 P. M. Symphony Society, Century Theatre, 3 P. M.

MONDAY.—First Brahms Festival Concert, Carnegie Hall, 8:15 P. M.

TUESDAY.—Volpe Symphony Orchestra, Carnegie Hall, 8:15 P. M.

WEDNESDAY.—Second Brahms Festival Concert, Carnegie Hall, 3 P. M.

THURSDAY.—Athens Mandolinata, Carnegie Hall, 8:15 P. M.

FRIDAY.—Third Brahms Festival Concert, Carnegie Hall, 3 P. M.

SATURDAY.—Fourth Brahms Festival Concert, Carnegie Hall, 8:15 P. M.

There are but three brief solo passages combining with the choir so as to enhance its effect by contrast. Only the most superficial view can regard Cherubini's requiem as its prototype. That is essentially adapted to the Catholic liturgy; its whole feeling is subordinate to that, and depends on the various vividly imagined impressions produced by the function of a mass for the dead.

"Brahms calls his work 'A German Requiem' and thus sufficiently indicates that it should only be remotely compared with the church service for the dead. \* \* \* The music of the German Requiem sinks too deep and soars far too high. Only a spirit free from the burden of sorrow can keep up with it. Nor even then is it easy to follow without fatigue. It is Brahms's cruelty that keeps the listener so long at such a high strung pitch of agitation."

Last Sunday some statistics of performances of American compositions by the Boston Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Max Fiedler were printed in this place. They were furnished by the professional statistician of the orchestra. They have moved George W. Chadwick, head of the New England Conservatory and one of the most distinguished of American composers to write to the music critic of THE SUN as follows:

"The records show that Converse's 'Ormad' was first performed by the St. Louis orchestra; that Hadley's 'Culprit Fay' was first played in Grand Rapids by the Theodore Thomas Orchestra; that my suite first came to hearing in Philadelphia, and that all the other pieces by me were performed before they were heard at the Boston Symphony concerts. Chadwick's 'Hadley's' 'Salome' has been played eighteen times, Converse's 'Mystic Trumpet' eight or ten and my suite five times since last April. All of which hardly seems to justify your remark about a 'second time.'"

Of course the writer of this department of THE SUN has no excuse to offer except that, in spite of his years of experience, he once again ate of the fruit with which the press agent did tempt him. It is a singular and interesting fact that as soon as a man becomes a press agent he buries his conscience. And the press agent of the Boston orchestra seems to be such a nice young man too.

W. J. HENDERSON.

## THE BRAHMS FESTIVAL

The Important Concert Series to Begin Tomorrow Evening.

With some 350 musicians taking part, including orchestra players, men and women choirsters, the two conductors, Walter and Frank Damrosch, and a group of famous soloists, the Brahms Festival, organized by the Symphony and Oratorio societies, will open Monday evening at Carnegie Hall with the first of four concerts. This unique tribute to the great composer, the first Brahms Festival ever given in this country, has evolved a preparation exceptionally devoted on the part of all those concerned in it, and the programmes have been so chosen as to present a comprehensive idea of what the German master put to his credit in a wide variety of forms. Monday evening's list will open with the "Academic Festival" overture, which Brahms built up on happy German student songs.

It will bring forward two choral works, the setting of Schiller's "Nanite" and the "Song of Triumph," the latter new here, though it was written to celebrate the German victory of 1871, and is one of the strongest of Brahms's choral utterances. The great C minor symphony, the first of Brahms's four, will close this inaugural programme of the festival. In the "Song of Triumph," Hamilton Earle, the noted English barytone, will sing.

The second concert of the series is set for Wednesday afternoon, when the much admired third symphony, that in F major, will be followed by a group of songs with pianoforte accompaniment, sung by Mmes. Matzenauer, the contralto, who has made a deep impression at the Metropolitan Opera House this season. Then will come the B flat concerto for pianoforte and orchestra, played by Wilhelm Bachaus, whose first American tour has shown him to be an artist of first rank attainments.

The third concert will fall on Friday afternoon, March 29, when the "Serenade" in D, for orchestra, and the fourth symphony, will be followed by a group of songs with pianoforte accompaniment, to be played by the gifted young Russian, Efrem Zimbalist. The final concert will take place on Saturday night, March 30,

and this programme has been balanced with special care. It begins with the joyous and colorful second symphony in D major, which has been popular in the best sense it first appeared. The second half of the programme will bring forward what is usually ranked as Brahms's masterpiece, the choral composition entitled "A German Requiem," written with the death of his mother as an overshadowing influence upon the composer's mind.

This singularly noble and deeply inspired work will be sung by the full chorus of the Oratorio Society, and the soloists will be Hamilton Earle, already mentioned, and Miss Florence Hinkle, who has won a place as one of this country's most admired soprano concert singers. A special book devoted to the music to be performed at this Brahms Festival has been prepared, and other evidences of the unusual character of the occasion will be found by those who attend.

The Orchestral Concerts. With the concert of this afternoon at the Century Theatre the Symphony Society of New York, Walter Damrosch, conductor, will complete its regular subscription season. For this programme two famous symphonies have been selected, that of Haydn in G major, No. 6, one of his best works in this form, and the "Eroica" of Beethoven, in E flat. A study of the season's programmes shows that the range of composers represented in the Symphony Society's series has been wide, including men of nearly every nationality in the music producing regions of the world. There have been many novelties, some not more than notes of current musical thought which indicate contemporary tendencies, and which Mr. Damrosch deemed worthy of a hearing here, and other compositions that promise to take their place in the repertoire. The rich literature of the orchestral field has also been drawn upon for a large number of familiar works.

The New York Philharmonic Society under Josef Strinsky and in conjunction with Kubelik, the noted Bohemian violinist, will appear to-day in Chicago for the first time in its seventy years' existence. This is the middle point of a two weeks' tour with Kubelik which includes St. Louis, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, Detroit and other cities never

before visited by the Philharmonic. On the return trip the orchestra will appear also in Columbus, O., Pittsburgh and Philadelphia and reach New York in time for a special Philharmonic-Strinsky-Kubelik concert which will close the orchestra's season and likewise mark the farewell appearance of Mr. Kubelik. This concert, to be given at the Hippodrome Sunday evening, March 31, will present a popular programme, features of which will be Dvorak's symphony "From the New World," Liszt's symphonic poem "Tasso," and the Mendelssohn violin concerto. The proceeds will be for the benefit of the New York Philharmonic pension fund.

## THE COMING OF NIKISCH.

Famous Orchestral Conductor to Direct Here After Long Absence.

Unusual interest is aroused over the forthcoming tour of Arthur Nikisch and the London Symphony Orchestra from April 8 to 28. Mr. Nikisch was known and admired by musical America twenty years ago, when he was the conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. To-day he is the most distinguished of European conductors and his services are always in great demand. While in America Mr. Nikisch will conduct the London Symphony Orchestra at thirty-one concerts in twenty-one days, and from the present demand for seats in every city of the itinerary capacity houses will greet this organization.

The brilliant career of Nikisch is known to all who are conversant with the progress of musical affairs. Born in Hungary in 1855, he showed an early aptitude for music and entered the Vienna Conservatory at 11. His course as a student was of rare distinction. Helemsberger, the director, overturned precedent in admiration for the young genius and permitted him to conduct the conservatory orchestra. He was the first student to win such an honor, and the only one of that period, although Mahler and Mottl were then pupils in the institution.

During his conservatory course Nikisch was constantly called upon by visiting artists to act as accompanist, an accomplishment for which he has always possessed a peculiar and distinguishing gift. He was also an able violinist and was chosen by Wagner as the first violin at the performance of Beethoven's Choral Symphony at the laying of the

## NOTES OF MUSIC EVENTS.

The sixth and last concert of the Kneisel Quartet for this season will take place at the Hotel Astor on Tuesday evening, April 2, at 8:15. The programme will include the Beethoven quartet in C major, op. 59, No. 3, and the quintet in F major, op. 85, by Brahms, in which they will have the assistance of Josef Kovarik, viola. The remainder of the programme will be announced later.

Jeanne Jomelli, the soprano, who is touring the South and the middle West, will give a recital at Carnegie Hall on April 4, the only date available, which did not conflict with her out of town engagements. Paul Gruppe, the cellist, will play two solo numbers.

The MacDowell Chorus, conducted by Kurt Schindler will give its last concert of the season in Carnegie Hall on Wednesday evening, April 17. The programme will be composed of miscellaneous selections exclusively and included in it will be some of the numbers which were so enthusiastically received by the audience attending the previous concerts given by the society.

Vladimir De Pachmann, the celebrated Chopin interpreter, is now completing his farewell tour of this country and he will give his last recital in this city for all time on Saturday afternoon, April 13, in Carnegie Hall, at 2:30. At the termination of Mr. De Pachmann's farewell tour of this country he will return to Europe and spend his time in travelling.

Henry Wolski will give a violin recital at the Carnegie Lyceum on April 4, at 8:15 P. M. He will play Handel's sonata in A, Paganini's concerto in D and Bach's Chaconne.

Maximilian Pilzer, violinist, will give a concert at Carnegie Hall on April 25 at 8:15 P. M. He will play Handel's D major sonata, Couperin's concerto in E minor, Lalo's "Symphonie Espagnole" and Beethoven's "New England" suite.

The Marum Quartet announce that its third and last concert at Cooper Union will take place on Thursday, April 4, 1912. The principal number on the programme will be Mozart's quintet for clarinet and strings and August Francke will be heard in a group of piano solos.

6. This concert will mark Mr. Bauer's third Carnegie Hall recital this season. On tour the pianist has filled over sixty engagements, extending as far west as the Pacific coast and south into Texas.

David Blapham, the distinguished barytone, will assist Miss Mary Reno Pinney at her concert to be given in the ballroom of the Plaza Hotel on the evening of March 22 at 8:30 o'clock. Miss Pinney was for several years the organist of First Church of Christ, Scientist, New York City.

Miss Dagmar de C. Rubner, pianist, will be the soloist at the Metropolitan Opera House concert on Sunday evening next. Miss Rubner is the daughter of Prof. Rubner of the Columbia University, and she has her debut at Carnegie, Baden, playing the Schumann concerto under Mottl. In this country she has had several fine orchestral appearances in Washington, Pittsburgh, Brooklyn and New York City, and has done some exceptional recital work in connection with her father at the Columbia University. Miss Rubner gave the first of her two recitals in Washington on March 22 under a most distinguished patronage.

The date for the second of the series of recitals given by Miss Isabel Hauser, pianist, and Alexander Salsavsky, concert master of the New York Symphony Orchestra, in the Myrtle Room of the Waldorf-Astoria has been changed from April 2 to April 4. At this recital Miss Hauser and Mr. Salsavsky will have the assistance of the Salsavsky String Quartet. The programme will include the piano quartet in G major by Mozart, Beethoven's piano and cello, op. 59, No. 2, by Mendelssohn and the Dvorak piano quintet, op. 84, which the artists are giving by request.

Leo Ornstein, the young Russian pianist, will be the soloist at the last subscription concert of the Volpe Symphony Orchestra, March 28, Carnegie Hall, when he will play the MacDowell concerto. This will probably be the last New York appearance of this young artist for several seasons, as he will concertize in Europe for the next two or three seasons. The first six of his compositions have recently been published by Arthur P. Schmidt of Boston, who has also entered into a seven year contract with young Ornstein for the exclusive rights of publishing his compositions.

A performance of Mendelssohn's oratorio, "Paul" on the evening of Tuesday, April 2, in the Myrtle Room of the Waldorf-Astoria, to which the music lovers public will be admitted free, is announced by the

People's Choral Union in cooperation with Prof. Samuel A. Baldwin. Dr. Frank Damrosch will be the conductor of the evening and, in addition to his personal 300, who has introduced to New York the organ; Mrs. Edith Chapman Gold, soprano; Miss Mary Jordan, contralto; Frederick Wheeler, tenor; William Wheeler, bass, and the New York Symphony Orchestra.

Ellen Arendrup, Danish soprano, assisted by Holgar Birkerød, Danish barytone, will give a song recital at the Plaza Hotel on Thursday afternoon under the direction of Annie Friedberg. Miss Arendrup will on this occasion make her New York debut in concert, having won distinction in Copenhagen before her arrival in the United States several months ago. Her programme will embrace four special groups of songs, the first by Brahms, Rubinstein, Max Reger and Hans Pfitzner. The second will be three Danish songs by P. Heise, followed by a group of Norwegian songs by Grieg, Peterson-Berger, Lange-Müller and Sjøgren. She will sing three songs in English, "My Desire," by E. Nevin, "To You," by Oley Speaks, and "Daybreak," by Maud Daniels.

Lola Fox, a Southern singer, will give a concert at the Plaza Hotel Wednesday evening, when she will be assisted by Dominico Savino, pianist; Max Jacobs, violinist, and Ernest Seibert, harpist. Miss Fox, who has introduced to New York many original Swiss songs, German lieder and Southern negro melodies, has won distinction for her talent in this line.

Mrs. Curtis Burnley, whose concluding recital of character impersonations and songs is announced for the Belasco Theatre, Friday afternoon, April 12, will be assisted by Miss Cary Bennett, soprano, who will sing three groups of songs, one of which, written by Mrs. Burnley, will be the public introduction. Mrs. Burnley, whose programme embraces only her own work of songs and monologues adapted by herself, has written several other original songs and monologues for the occasion.

## MR. FRIEDHEIM'S CONCERT.

Arthur Friedheim, pianist, one of the few remaining Liszt pupils, will give a recital at Carnegie Hall next Sunday afternoon. The programme: